

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET INFORMATION CONSUMER AFFAIRS (16)

MISSION

The mission of the agency as set out in the City Charter, is to provide consumer education and information, enforce ordinances prohibiting fraudulent practices, investigate consumer complaints, and grant, revoke or approve licenses and permits as required by City ordinances. The director is empowered to hold hearings to determine whether or not licenses should be revoked to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and promulgate rules for the department's procedures. The Weights and Measures Division is responsible for sealing taxicab meters and halting overweight trucks.

DESCRIPTION

Consumer Affairs provides consumer education and information, and works to resolve disputes between consumers and businesses. Divisions include the Business License Center, whose primary responsibilities involve general business licenses and taxicab bonds, and the Weights and Measures operation, whose responsibilities include truck inspections to ensure size and weight loads are within the legal limits and to monitor taxicab meters and their operating condition.

Our education mission is carried out through the publication and distribution of pamphlets, articles and newsletters. Information is disseminated through public speaking, lectures, classes, media announcements and individual replies to questions that come in by phone or mail. License investigators check business outlets to determine that fees are collected, and assist new business operators in obtaining necessary permits and licenses.

CORE SERVICES

Neighborhood Stabilization and Improvement

Weights and Measures – We enforce city codes pertaining to taxicab inspections and licensing. We also enforce trucking ordinances. Especially those that pertain to overweight trucks.

Consumer Advocacy – The department works in conjunction with Buildings and Safety Engineering Department as it relates to effective home code enforcement. We mediate consumer complaints, which include identifying and forwarding unlicensed and/or unethical home repair contractors, predatory mortgage lending and/or real estate companies to the appropriate agencies for administrative review for prosecution.

Business License Center – The Business License Center is a clearinghouse for all business licenses to assure that all businesses meet building, fire, and health standards before a license is issued.

Public Safety

Weights and Measures- We inspect and weigh trucks according to State requirements and work cooperatively with the State to better the conditions and safeness of our streets.

Consumer Advocacy – We receive, evaluate and mediate consumer complaints and seek appropriate enforcement of all laws and codes. Our main focus is to deal with consumer fraud. Vigorous enforcement of all consumer protection codes laws and regulations reduce consumer crime both in fact and perception.

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Business License Center – This Division is a clearinghouse for all business licenses and as such we will not issue any licenses until all appropriate public health approvals are on file before a business license is issued.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

The department has expanded information on its website and placed our complaint form on line, which provides an additional means to file a complaint.

All the business license ordinances have been reviewed and recommendations made to the Law Department that some of the licenses should be changed from a yearly expiration to a two-year cycle.

We have worked with the Law Department in updating and amending parking, weight and measures, and amusement ordinances.

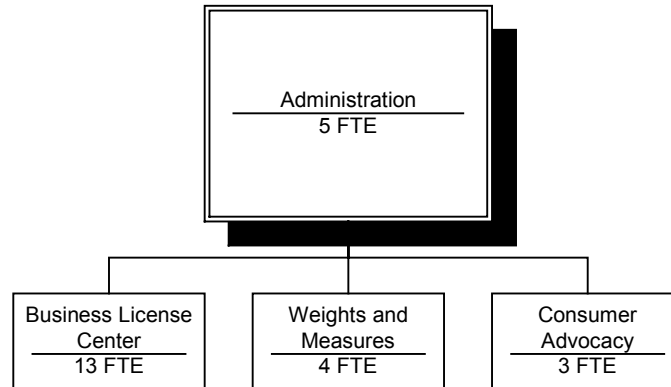
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

We are also working with the ITS to computerize the taxicab bonding and meter sealing functions for the Weights and Measures Division.

With the assistance of ITS, the department will explore the possibility of scanning old documents to minimize the need for storage space.

We will continue to expand on relationships formed with the Attorney General's Office, the Better Business Bureau, AARP, and the Federal Trade Commission.

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PERFORMANCE GOALS, MEASURES AND TARGETS

Goals: Measures	1999-00 Actual	2000-01 Projection	2001-02 Target
Enhance consumer safety:			
Complaints investigated	1,000	900	900
Complaints resolved	900	800	800
Improve turnaround for issuing licenses:			
Business licenses issued	45,000	45,000	45,000
Taxi meters inspected	1,500	1,600	1,600

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EXPENDITURES

	1999-00 Actual Expense	2000-01 Redbook	2001-02 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Salary & Wages	\$ 775,347	\$ 860,815	\$ 969,428	\$ 108,613	13%
Employee Benefits	421,182	413,620	485,759	72,139	17%
Prof/Contractual	173,397	240,000	240,000	-	0%
Operating Supplies	36,552	33,008	33,008	-	0%
Operating Services	178,229	216,576	217,301	725	0%
Capital Equipment	33,219	111,500	11,500	(100,000)	-90%
Other Expenses	5,679	9,767	11,766	1,999	20%
TOTAL	\$ 1,623,605	\$ 1,885,286	\$ 1,968,762	\$ 83,476	4%
POSITIONS	23	24	25	1	4%

REVENUES

	1999-00 Actual Revenue	2000-01 Redbook	2001-02 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Licenses/Permits	\$ 1,813,252	\$ 1,958,000	\$ 2,016,740	\$ 58,740	3%
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	0%
TOTAL	\$ 1,813,252	\$ 1,958,000	\$ 2,016,740	\$ 58,740	3%

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